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### **Local Plan Consultation Response**

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I write as the elected voluntary sector representative on the council's Health and Well-Being Board and as the Health lead on the executive of the Enfield Over 50's Forum in which capacity I meet regularly with the Enfield CCG and increasingly with the NCL ICP, so I have looked at the Plan from the perspective of whether and how, if enacted, it would help our weak health economy or create further problems for it.

We are the weakest health economy in NCL for a variety of complex historical reasons, we have just fallen into the category of being one of the worst ten boroughs in the country for low healthy life expectancy while our covid statistics illustrate starkly the many-layered deprivation we must tackle as well as the vulnerability of our older residents who are a growing cohort.

Our health challenges are not concentrated in the areas of proposed construction nor are the results likely to ease them. Significant illness and disease is preventable with up-stream interventions by health services and healthy-living housing hubs and, not only do we have too few GPs but far too little green space or well-designed affordable or social housing to facilitate this. For up-stream prevention, our Public Health colleagues tell us that we need cleaner air, more exercise & better diets, among other things. Other things must include adequate, well-planned, environmentally considered housing as a fundamental human need, and the increasing displacement of people from inner London boroughs, too many in poor mental and physical health, makes housing a more urgent priority than ever.

My understanding is that Enfield has sufficient brownfield capacity to build 24,000 new homes to modern, pedestrian safe, car limited and green, healthy standards. I sat on the initial Public Health working party that contributed to the Meridian Water development and know that we have the expertise and political will to build and build better, and that we need to

create homes where people have easy access to transport hubs and so jobs, where houses are built for lifetime use for a variety of housing needs and at low rent, as well as to-buy housing. Above all we need to be seen as recognising the housing challenges of our most needy residents, and isolated, inappropriately housed older residents must be counted within this category. The pandemic has taught us once and for all that disease is no respecter of ward boundaries and that we must seek to create a healthy environment across the piece for a wide variety of our citizens if we are all to prosper and stay safe.

As we all know, re-developing brown field sites costs developers more than new-build on green field sites and it is evident that the areas of the Green Belt that the Plan is proposing to build on do virtually nothing for our poorer residents on the housing register, for example, and it would facilitate the added disbenefit of depriving the borough of vitally important lungs which help to offset the high levels of air and other pollution we suffer from. These breathing spaces, now well-documented as facilitators of a sense of well-being, are used by a range of residents, and including the no-longer young, for whom they provide important social as well as exercise space. Isolation is a contributory factor in both mental and physical illness. At present, they also contribute to offsetting the unhealthy consequences for the borough of the Edmonton incinerator. Apart from the London-backed opposition to building on the Green Belt, there is a real danger that the Plan will be seen as a developers' charter and a missed opportunity to be more innovative and progressive. The proposed houses are not to be constructed for our residents in Upper Edmonton, Edmonton Green Lower Edmonton and other wards of high and old housing density, poor spatial amenity, low life expectancy and high disease registers. As a former councillor in Edmonton I have detailed knowledge of its health geography.

We need housing built where our residents want and can afford to live; the Plan is deeply unconvincing about both affordability and siting and it neglects older people who constitute a growing demographic. We have an acute shortage of smaller houses and accessible homes for older residents across the socio-economic spectrum. Attention to this could facilitate the release of houses now too large or in other ways unsuitable for ageing residents who could move to smaller, easier to manage accommodation

constructed in mixed areas with consideration for their needs and where they could be contributing to community cohesion through their active participation. There is no evidence of any work having been done to scope this and it would be popular well beyond the older age ranges.

We don't need more of the same ribbon development that robs Peter in encroaching on the Green Belt but doesn't at the same time pay Paul, our electors in the L-shape of deprivation along the bottom and up the eastern edge of our borough or older residents who have contributed to the borough and now have a housing offer as well as housing needs. We deserve a better Plan that panders less to developers, seeks the active backing of the Mayor of London and demonstrates the ability of the Council to think for the future and for all age groups. The Plan in its present form will be unpopular with parts of western Enfield and will at best be met with indifference, incomprehension in the East or, at worst, open resentment that it doesn't provide a blueprint for improvement for them.

Housing is a wicked problem and we need a Plan that reflects the abilities of our council officers and leaders to develop clever fancy footsteps that dance to government statute in ways that ensure that local delivery meets local needs, not developers plans. We can do better than this.